

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama on Occasion of Ramadan	1
Statement by Secretary Clinton on Violence in Syria	1
Secretary Clinton Swears In Gary Locke as Ambassador to China	1
American Musician will.i.am Heading to China to Promote Exchanges	2

President Obama on Occasion of Ramadan

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
August 1, 2011

Statement by the President on the Occasion of Ramadan

As Ramadan begins, Michelle and I would like to send our best wishes to Muslim communities in the United States and around the world. Ramadan is a festive time that is anticipated for months by Muslims everywhere. Families and communities share the happiness of gathering together for iftar and prayers. Bazaars light up the night in many cities from Rabat to Jakarta. And here in the United States, Muslim Americans share Ramadan traditions with their neighbors, fellow students, and co-workers.

For so many Muslims around the world, Ramadan is also a time of deep reflection and sacrifice. As in other faiths, fasting is used to increase spirituality, discipline, and consciousness of God's mercy. It is also a reminder of the importance of reaching out to those less fortunate. The heartbreaking accounts of lost lives and the images of families and children in Somalia and the Horn of Africa struggling to survive remind us of our common humanity and compel us to act. Now is the time for nations and peoples to come together to avert an even worse catastrophe by offering support and assistance to on-going relief efforts.

Times like this remind us of the lesson of all great faiths, including Islam -- that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. In that spirit, I wish Muslims around the world a blessed month, and I look forward to again hosting an iftar dinner here at the White House. Ramadan Kareem.

Statement by Secretary Clinton on Violence in Syria

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson
August 1, 2011

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON**Continuing Violence in Syria**

The Syrian regime's violent assault on civilians continued today, even as Ramadan began, highlighting again the brutality and viciousness of the Assad regime. Yesterday, President Obama said that President Assad has shown that he is incapable and unwilling to respond to the legitimate grievances of the Syrian people. Today, as the campaign of violence continues, President Assad is

further ensuring that he and his regime will be left in the past, and that the Syrian people themselves will be the ones to determine its future.

During what should be a time of prayer and family gathering, we mourn the deaths of all those killed, especially innocent children like Layal Askar, a one-year old killed by a stray bullet from a security officer's gun in the southern city of al-Hirak. The United States stands with the Syrian people and we condemn the Assad regime's violent campaign against them. We call on President Assad to stop the slaughter now. We call on those members of the United Nations Security Council who have opposed any Security Council action that would call on Assad to stop the killing to reconsider their positions. And we call on the international community to come together behind the people of Syria in this critical time.

As I have said before, President Assad has lost his legitimacy with the Syrian people. Syria will be a better place when a democratic transition goes forward.

Secretary Clinton Swears In Gary Locke as Ambassador to China

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has sworn in former Commerce Secretary Gary Locke as U.S. ambassador to China, the first Chinese American to hold the post in American history.

"It is an exciting and proud day for this administration to be sending Gary and his wonderful family to China," Clinton said. Stressing the United States' "extraordinarily important" relationship with China, the secretary expressed confidence that Locke will follow through on commitments made by President Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao to create a more "positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship."

"We are two complex, large nations with different histories and different political systems, but we know the importance of getting to know one another better, working together and solving problems together," Clinton said.

She praised Locke as "an extraordinarily hard worker" with a "history of distinction in his many public service responsibilities." The envoy will formally become ambassador after presenting his credentials in Beijing.

Locke was nominated by President Obama March 9 in a White House ceremony, and was confirmed unanimously by the U.S. Senate July 27.

"Our relationship with China is one of the most critical of the 21st century," Obama said during Locke's

nomination. "Continued cooperation between our countries will be good for America, it will be good for China, and it will be good for the world."

Obama said that as the grandson of a Chinese immigrant who went on to live the American dream, Locke is "the right person to continue this cooperation."

Locke's grandfather left China more than 100 years ago aboard a steamship bound for the United States, where he worked as a domestic servant for a family in Washington state in return for the opportunity to learn English.

"A century later, his grandson will return to China as America's top diplomat," Obama said.

Locke was also the first Chinese-American governor when he was elected in Washington state in 1996, and he worked as governor to attract jobs and business to his state. Locke joined the Obama administration in 2009 to be the president's chief advocate for America's businesses, specifically its exports abroad. Obama said that, as part of that assignment, he asked Locke to continue to make progress on the U.S.-China bilateral relationship.

During the past two years, Locke has overseen an increase in American exports — particularly exports to China, a country with which the United States recently signed trade deals that will support 235,000 American jobs. Locke was also the president's lead official for his National Export Initiative, which is designed to make the United States more competitive globally in trade and double U.S. exports of goods and services over five years. In 2010, the United States increased exports to China by 34 percent.

Locke succeeds Ambassador Jon Huntsman, the former Republican governor of Utah, who recently asked to step down.

The United States and China are working to improve nation-to-nation relations through regular visits and consultations on bilateral, regional and global political, economic and security issues. Locke said the two countries have a "profoundly important and complex diplomatic, economic and strategic bilateral relationship," and that while challenges exist, there also is "great promise for extended cooperation and collaboration."

He pledged to "keep the lines of communication open, to convey the administration's positions clearly and to engage with Chinese government officials at the highest levels" and said that he hoped to also communicate directly with the Chinese people "to improve understanding between our great nations."

Locke said he will also continue joint efforts with China to

curb climate change, seek cleaner sources of energy and stop nuclear proliferation, as well to enhance economic ties.

"As a child of Chinese immigrants growing up in the state of Washington, having the opportunity to represent America, the land of my birth, and to represent American values was surely beyond any dream I could have had," Locke said. "It is America, and America's promise as a land of freedom, equality and opportunity, that I will represent when serving the president and the American people as the United States ambassador to China."

American Musician will.i.am Heading to China to Promote Exchanges

Washington — Hip-hop artist will.i.am is partnering with the U.S. Department of State to celebrate U.S.-China educational and cultural exchanges.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with the award-winning producer, musician and vocalist of the Black Eyed Peas on July 29 in Washington.

During the meeting, Clinton highlighted the importance of educational and cultural ties between the United States and China, in particular the need to further the goals of President Obama's 100,000 Strong Initiative. That initiative aims to increase significantly the number and diversity of American students studying in China.

To support 100,000 Strong and to highlight the overall importance of educational and cultural ties between the two nations, will.i.am will direct a concert in Beijing later in 2011.

The Beijing concert is being organized by Americans Promoting Study Abroad, a U.S. nonprofit organization that offers full scholarships to public secondary school students in the United States for language and culture studies in China. Funds raised in association with the concert will be used to support and operate study-abroad programs in China for underserved American students.

"In order to become responsible global citizens, young people need to experience the world around them," will.i.am said. "Kids from underserved communities rarely have the opportunity to study and travel abroad, and we want to change that. We must make sure that American students have the cultural awareness and skills necessary to succeed in a global economy."

In addition to being an accomplished artist, will.i.am is also the creator of the viral video "Yes, We Can," which boosted support for then-candidate Obama among young voters before the 2008 presidential election.

The specific date for the performance and the roster of performers have not yet been announced, but artists from both the United States and China will participate, according to the State Department.

"Music is the first social network," will.i.am said. "100,000 Strong rings true to what I'm already doing, and I'm proud and blessed to be doing it."

Obama announced the 100,000 Strong Initiative in November 2009, and Clinton launched the effort in May 2010.

The initiative is a public-private partnership to which private corporate and foundation donors thus far have pledged more than \$7 million. The Chinese government has offered 20,000 scholarships for U.S. students.

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